

Spring 1-15-2000

ENG 3009C-001: Myth and Culture

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Martone.
English 3009C.

Office: 327 CH. Phone: 6982.
Office Hrs: MWF 9:00-10:00;
Tues. 1:00-2:00, and by appt.

Course Description.

Myth and Culture is an introduction to comparative mythology. In this course we will first explore a range of world-views from Native America, China and Vietnam, the Near East and Europe. We'll then turn to two American novels, recent poetry, and environmentalist literature as we examine the mythological imagination in contemporary American life.

Texts.

Ellison, *Invisible Man*.
Humphries, *Ovid: The Metamorphoses*.
Kerouac, *On the Road*.
Merchant, *Earthcare*.
Meyeroff, *Peyote Hunt*.
Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*.
Nguyen, *Tale of Kieu*.
Powers, *Yuwipi*.
Sandars, *Gilgamesh*.
Snyder, *No Nature*.
Wu, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*.

Requirements and Evaluation.

Regular attendance and participation. (You will be allowed 2 absences. I will lower your final grade by one letter for each unexcused absence thereafter.)

Short papers and quizzes (25% of grade).

Midterm and final examinations (50% of grade).

10-page final project on an approved topic (25% of grade).

You must complete all course requirements punctually to receive a passing grade in the course.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive accommodations, which I will gladly provide, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Schedule.

- **January 19-21.** Introductory. *Black Elk Speaks*. Themes for discussion: The nature of myth. Personal and collective vision. "Translation" and the problematics of studying other cultures. American History.
- **January 24-28.** Powers, *Yuwipi*. Themes for discussion: The Shaman. Spiritual and physical illness. The nature of ritual.
- **Jan. 31-February 4.** Meyeroff, *Peyote Hunt*. Themes for discussion: The pilgrimage. Ordinary time versus the eternal. Art and spirituality.

- **February 7-9.** Confucius and Lao Tzu, in Wu, *A Sourcebook of Chinese Philosophy*. Chuang Tzu. Chinese views of nature, ch'i, and the Way. Transformation.
- **February 14-18.** Lao Tzu, cont'd. Chuang Tzu.
- **February 21-25.** *The Heart Sutra* (in Wu). Introduction to Buddhism. The four noble truths and eightfold path. Theravada and Mahayana.. The Bodhisattva. Emptiness and insight. Zen.
- **February 28-March 3.** Nguyen, *Tale of Kieu*. Themes for discussion: "Yin" culture and the female hero. Love and... time.
- **March 6.** Midterm examination.
- **March 8-10.** Sandars, *Gilgamesh*. Themes for discussion: The hero and quest. Problem of mortality and the Western view of nature. Misogyny.
- **March 13-17.** Spring Break.
- **March 20-24.** Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*. Themes for discussion: "Nature" and the "Human" as concepts. Transformation. Art and gender. Also read and discuss Merchant, *Earthcare*, pp. 3-56.
- **March 27-31.** Kerouac, *On the Road*. "Buddies" then and now. "beat" reality. Jazz, abstract expressionism, TV, and Eisenhower.
- **April 3-7.** Ellison, *Invisible Man*. The underground. The anti-hero and ironic quest. Who's free? **Final Paper Proposals due April 7.**
- **April 10-14.** Ellison, cont'd. **Conferences.**
- **April 17-21.** Snyder, *No Nature*.
- **April 24-26.** Merchant, *Earthcare*.
- **April 26.** Final Papers Due.